

THE AMHERST REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Fiscal Year 2008

The Amherst Redevelopment Authority (ARA) was established by Town Meeting in 1971. In Massachusetts redevelopment authorities are autonomous agencies, which municipalities may form to aid in urban renewal under MGL, Chapter 121B. Urban renewal is restricted to “decadent” or “blighted” areas of unrealized potential for a community. The ARA has full control over projects, although public participation plays a major role. Town Meeting must approve all requests for project funds.

Although enabled to undertake redevelopment projects throughout the community, the ARA’s initial task was to plan and develop Boltwood Walk, a 9.6-acre area between Main Street and Kellogg Avenue, most of it previously used for schools. The purpose of the Boltwood Walk Project has been to strengthen the center of Amherst with the addition of facilities for community activities and services, business, and housing for the elderly. Special emphasis has been placed on providing a place where older citizens can lead active, independent lives. Boltwood Walk includes Ann Whalen Apartments, Clark House, the Bangs Community Center, and several commercial properties and public ways. With the completion of the Boltwood Walk parking garage in 2002, redevelopment of the properties within the Boltwood Walk Project was substantially completed.

The Amherst Redevelopment Authority continues to meet occasionally to discuss possible new projects and activities it could implement to benefit the Town of Amherst.

Margaret Roberts and Aaron Hayden were elected to the ARA in the 2008 annual town-wide election. ARA member terms are five years. The other members of the ARA are Fran VanTreese, Larry Kelley and Jeanne Traester (Governor’s appointee).